



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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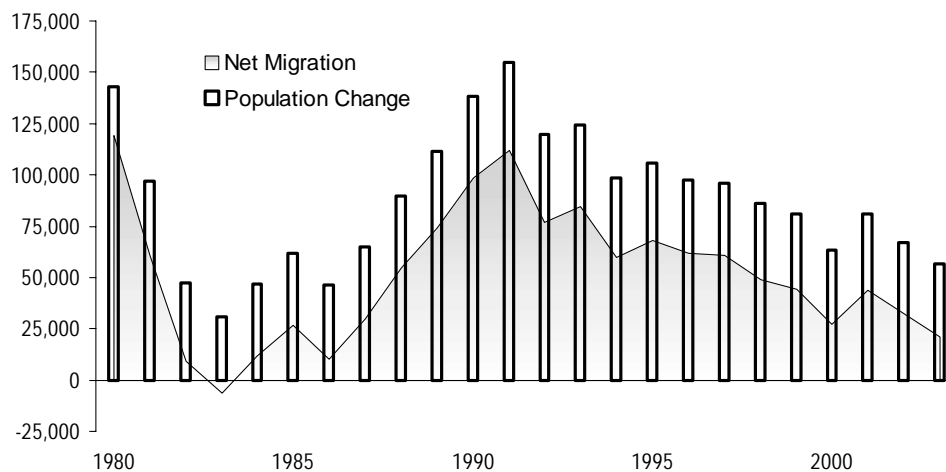
Washington State population growth still slowed by the economy

OLYMPIA – Washington State’s population continues to grow, but at a much slower rate, reflecting the state’s weak economy. Annual population estimates prepared by the Office of Financial Management show the state’s rate of growth has dropped from about 1.5 percent in the late 1990s to a current low of 0.9 percent.

Washington’s population reached 6,098,300 on April 1, representing an increase this year of 56,600, Theresa Lowe, the state’s chief demographer, said Monday. That compares to an increase of 80,800 in 2001 and 66,800 last year.

“The slower population growth is consistent with Washington’s weak economy and in line with projections we made last fall,” Lowe said. “We really can’t expect much more until the economy rebounds.”

State growth continues to slow.



Migration to Washington has always been driven by economic opportunity and migration is a major component of Washington's growth. But for now, slower growth is expected to last through 2004 and into 2005. Thus, population growth will really depend on how fast Washington's economy recovers and how that recovery stacks up against what other states have to offer in terms of job opportunities, Lowe said

The Census 2000 population count marks the baseline for tracking a new decade of population change in the state. The majority of growth since 2000 remains concentrated in Western Washington with the largest gains including increases of 42,254 in King County, 32,882 in Pierce County, 31,476 in Snohomish County and 27,062 in Clark County.

The fastest growing counties – in terms of percentage change – are Franklin County (8.6 percent), Clark County (7.8 percent), Benton County (6.4 percent) and Kittitas County (5.5 percent).

The population of Washington's cities and towns totaled 3,736,468 on April 1 this year, up 216,900 over the 2000 federal census count. Annexations and incorporations account for about 113,000 of this increase. Spokane Valley in Spokane County became Washington's newest city in March 2003 and has an estimated 82,000 residents.

Detailed information on the April 1, 2003, population estimates for cities, towns and counties is on the Office of Financial Management web page at www.ofm.wa.gov.

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